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Book Reviews

THE MANICHAEAN SCRIPTURES

If Mithra and his cult were in the early centuries rivals of the Christ and Christianity serious and important enough to call forth studies like those of Cumont, Christianity after the attainment of its canon, its supremacy in the Roman world, its orthodoxy, had scarcely a greater and more dangerous rival than Mani and Manichaeism. It came, like Mithraism, from Persian lands, and like it was of an eclectic syncretism with an appeal to the popular imagination. Though it did not enjoy great honor in its home land, more particularly with the governmental authorities and the exponents of the state religion, it preceded Christianity into the populous and interesting, though to the Western mind unfortunately utterly remote and foreign, regions of Shamanism, Brahmanism, Taoism, and Buddhism, and throughout the Middle Ages remained more than a rival of Christianity there.

This significant factor in the religious life of humanity has, of course, been carefully studied for many years, and large and important volumes have been dedicated to its history and to a systematic presentation of its teachings. But with it all there has remained about it much of a problematic nature, much that was mysterious and unintelligible. This was due not to lack of diligence and acumen on the part of authors, many of whom wrote a half-century or more ago, but to the lack of good source-material. Owing to severe governmental repression, accompanied in the end by considerable decrease in popular interest, the scriptures and literatures of the Manichaeans had largely disappeared, and fragments of them and information about them and their adherents were obtainable only from adverse polemical writings.

Of late, especially through explorations and excavations in the heart of Asia, a considerable amount of better source-material has been added to our scanty store. But, though Cumont himself devoted considerable "Researches" to the problem, Manichaeism has not yet found its Cumont. The latest extensive publication on the subject, two volumes by Prosper Alfarc,¹ is not intended to furnish this full and final study, but rather to prepare the way for it by most necessary preliminary labors. In the very nature of the case, the source-material referred to above, both new and old, was scattered far and wide in many volumes, some of them high in price or out of print, and difficult to obtain at any price. It will, therefore, be most

¹ *Les Écritures Manichéennes*. By Prosper Alfarc. I. *Vue générale*, iii+154 pages; II. *Étude analytique*, 240 pages. Paris: Émile Nourry, 1918-19.

gratifying to other students, as well as to Dr. Alfarić himself, to have it thus gathered up in small compass and in convenient form.

The first volume gives a very good general survey in two parts, the first dealing with the "Constitution," i.e., the origin and general characteristics of the scriptures and sacred writings, composed, adopted, or used by Mani and the Manichaeans, the second with the history of these books, their propagation and wide dissemination, followed by rapid and pretty thorough disappearance, which left but few and not extensive fragments surviving. A brief sketch of these survivals and a general appreciation of their interest, meaning, and value concludes the volume. The second volume presents the documents themselves. The first part analyzes in great detail and gives much in complete translation of what remains of scriptures properly Manichaean, the writings of Mani himself and of disciples and followers. The second section sketches, quite naturally in somewhat less detail, the scriptures adopted by the Manichaeans, Jewish, Christian, and pagan, the latter including with Hellenic works, Zoroastrian or Mazdaean and Buddhistic writings. This arrangement entails some repetitions, which to the author meant added labor; to the student these will be a help rather than a hindrance with such refractory materials.

Dr. Alfarić was well prepared for his difficult undertaking by his studies on the intellectual development of St. Augustine, whose writings are one of the chief sources, in some respects the most important, for the history and the sacred literature of Mani and his church. The excellence of the work is further guaranteed by the fact that the publication was encouraged by the Société Asiatique. The student may therefore in the main safely trust the facts and materials presented.

It goes without saying, that work entailing collection of materials from modern publications in French, English, German, Russian, etc., about writings preserved in a fragmentary way in Latin, Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Chinese, etc., cannot be of absolutely even excellence nor wholly up to date throughout, more particularly because no small amount of this work was done during the great world-war, from the shadow of which we are barely emerging. Even the extraordinarily able, diligent, and painstaking Chauvin was not able to attain perfection in his standard *Bibliographie Arabe*. Considering the difficulties under which the work was done the reviewer cannot but express admiration for the degree of accuracy and completeness attained by Dr. Alfarić.

It was hardly to be expected that notice should have been taken in Volume I, page 15 (note 11), and Volume II, page 124 (note 2), of the reviewer's own brief examination of the source-material on Harmonius, son of Bardaisan, *AJSL*, XXXII (1916), 199-202. It is less easy to understand how Lidzbarski's publication of the text of the Mandaean *Sidra de Jahja*, which came out in 1905, escaped the author's eye (Vol. I, p. 6, n. 6), though of course war-time conditions may well have prevented him from

knowing about the second volume, containing introduction, translation, and commentary, which appeared in 1915. On Mazdak and the Mazdakites, it seems to the reviewer that Noeldeke's *Geschichte der Sassaniden*, Arthur Christensen's *L'Empire des Sassanides*, and Barthold's "Die persische Schu'ubiya," *ZDMG*, XXVI (1912, *Fest-Schrift für Ignaz Goldziher*), 249-66, should have been consulted and mentioned.

The reviewer, being an Arabist, was particularly gratified to find much grist for his mill in Dr. Alfarić's publication. There is not a little that is new and good, and still more that gives impetus to new research and re-examination of former opinions on the relations of Mohammed and Islam to Sabians, Mandaeans, and Manichaeans. To one or two points, however, the reviewer believes he must take exception. The statement (Vol. I, p. 75) that translation of Manichaean writings was not possible during the time of the 'Umayyads can hardly stand. The author himself mentions facts that make this bald statement rather doubtful (Vol. I, pp. 73 f.), and the writings of Henri Lammens on the period of the 'Umayyads will go far toward changing Dr. Alfarić's opinion on this matter. In this connection the reviewer must beg Dr. Alfarić to revise his writing of Hadjdjâdj b. Jusuf (Vol. I, p. 73), as, indeed, the transliterations throughout will bear generous revision. Such revision has evidently been begun, but has not been carried through in the case of Theodore Abû Qurra (written *abou-Karra*, Vol. I, p. 74, where "ou évêque de Carrhes" should be deleted; *abou-Kourra* thereafter, until Vol. II, Index, p. 234, has *abou Qourra*). On Ibn al Moqaffa and *Kalila wa Dimna*, Vol. I, p. 76, Hertel, *Das Pañcatantra*, Leipzig, 1914, p. 392, n. 1, and, especially, Noeldeke, *Burzoe's Einleitung zu dem Buche Kalila wa Dimna*, Strassburg, 1912, pp. 3 f. and p. 15, should be added. The reviewer was rather surprised to find his old friends, the Barmecides, one time considered Zoroastrians, classed as Manichaeans (Vol. I, pp. 79 and 102); perhaps Barthold's article on "Barmak" in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* will convince Dr. Alfarić, as it has convinced the reviewer, that they were Buddhists of Balkh. Al-Djâhiz, quoted or referred to a number of times, may hardly at this late date be described as little known (Vol. I, p. 121); nor is his *Livre des animaux* any longer in part unpublished (ed. Cairo 1323/4=1905/6, bad, but published).

It is perfectly correct, of course, that quotations of Manichaean literature by ancient or medieval authors should be given as far as possible in the author's own words; yet some hint of the fact that Birûnî is probably using Moslem language when he says that Mani represented himself as "the seal of the prophets," and that the *Acta Archelai* say the same thing in other words (Vol. II, p. 37), might have been given. Or may the phraseology of Mohammed and the Moslems in this case as in others be due to Manichaean, or Mandaean (Sabian), or similar Jewish, Christian, or Gnostic influence? Some of the misprints, by which the volumes are disfigured to a much greater extent than the little tables of *errata* show, are disconcerting

at first sight and seriously mar the pleasure of the reader; *engendr  s* (Vol. II, p. 25), for *inengendr  s* (p. 24) (*  γεννήτους*), is only one case of well over a hundred. Montgomery's *Samaritans* is quoted once after the edition, Philadelphia, 1907, another time as Oxford, 1913. The *Acta Archelai* are quoted frequently (the reviewer does not know, whether throughout) after Lacagni's chapters, although the author knows the edition of Beeson and is evidently using it (Vol. I, p. 21). From Beeson's edition I John 5:19 might have been added to the New Testament passages, which Mani, as represented in the *Acta Archelai*, quotes.

It is evident that, in spite of the essential excellence of the work, there is still room for improvement; particularly in externals, it is true, but yet most necessary improvement. It is to be hoped that this edition, which otherwise bears some of the marks of war-time work, may, because of post-war conditions, have been struck off in a sufficiently limited number of copies to necessitate a new edition in not too long a time. For no doubt Dr. Alf  ric is as conscious as are others of the imperfections, chiefly in proofreading, that mar the first print of this work of lasting value, and with his well-wishers desires that this value may be enhanced by their speedy correction.

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